

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THAT THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE AGING AND
3 LONG-TERM SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND
4 FAMILIES DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE PUBLIC
5 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONVENE AS A MULTI-AGENCY TASK FORCE TO
6 DEVELOP AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL PLAN TO ASSESS THE NEEDS OF
7 GRANDCHILDREN AND GRANDPARENTS WHO LIVE TOGETHER IN
8 GRANDPARENT-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.

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10 WHEREAS, the 2000 United States census found that there
11 are approximately twenty-four thousand five hundred
12 grandparents in New Mexico who are primarily responsible for
13 raising their grandchildren; and

14 WHEREAS, since many of these households include two or
15 more grandchildren, estimates are that at least forty
16 thousand children are being raised by their grandparents in
17 this state; and

18 WHEREAS, by raising their grandchildren, these
19 grandparents save the state millions of dollars annually in
20 foster-care costs, provide some family stability for these
21 children and help preserve the relationship of the children
22 to their families, communities and cultures; and

23 WHEREAS, children raised by grandparents are more likely
24 to live in poverty and to have suffered trauma, abuse or
25 neglect, due to separation from their parents; and

1 WHEREAS, children being raised by grandparents often
2 have parents who suffer from substance abuse, mental illness
3 or incarceration, putting the children at high risk to follow
4 their parents' example; and

5 WHEREAS, children raised by grandparents often
6 experience a history of significant disruptions in their
7 education and may not have a legal guardian to enroll them in
8 school; and

9 WHEREAS, grandparents raising their grandchildren may
10 lack the energy, good health and financial ability of other
11 relatives who could be potential caregivers; and

12 WHEREAS, many grandparents receive little or no help
13 from the state as well as confusing and erroneous information
14 about the social services and benefits to which they may be
15 entitled;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department, the
18 aging and long-term services department, the children, youth
19 and families department, the department of health and the
20 public education department be requested to convene a
21 multi-agency task force to develop an interdepartmental plan
22 to assess the needs of grandchildren and grandparents living
23 in grandparent-headed households; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include
25 representatives of state and local law enforcement agencies,

1 the statewide association of district court judges, the state
2 bar of New Mexico and caregivers and advocates for families
3 and children; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force identify the
5 number of children living with their grandparents and their
6 demographics and needs; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force develop a
8 plan to ensure that grandchildren and grandparents living in
9 grandparent-headed households have access to the educational,
10 social, medical and mental health services to which they are
11 entitled; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force study how
13 other states address the challenge of providing support to
14 grandparents who are in this situation; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
16 progress and legislative recommendations to the legislative
17 health and human services committee at its October 2005
18 meeting; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
20 transmitted to the secretary of human services, the secretary
21 of aging and long-term services, the secretary of children,
22 youth and families, the secretary of health and the secretary
23 of public education. _____